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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/799,736	03/15/2004	Christer Owman	7675.0001-04	9982
22852 7590 01/10/2007 FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP 901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413			EXAMINER LANDSMAN, ROBERT S	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1647	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
3 MONTHS		01/10/2007	PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/799,736

Applicant(s)

OWMAN, CHRISTER

Examiner

Robert Landsman

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 October 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 16 and 38-51 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 16 and 38-51 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 15 March 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Sequence Comparisons and B.</u> |

DETAILED ACTION

1. Formal Matters

- A. The Election filed 10/12/06 has been entered into the record.
- B. Claims 16 and 38-51 are pending. Claims 43-51 are withdrawn as being drawn to a non-elected invention. Therefore, claims 16 and 38-42 are the subject of this Office Action.
- C. In response to the Restriction mailed 9/13/06, Applicants elected Group I with traverse and argued that it would not be a search burden to examine Groups I and II together. As seen in the Restriction, these Groups are related as product and process of use. Therefore, the Restriction is deemed proper. However, if the product claims are allowable, the process of using the product (Group II) may be rejoined if they are commensurate in scope with the allowed product claims. This Restriction is deemed proper and is made FINAL.

2. Specification

- A. The specification is objected to since Figures 5A-B, 12A-B

3. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

- A. Claims 16 and 38-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is not supported by a specific, substantial and credible asserted utility or a well established utility. These claims are directed to the receptor of SEQ ID NO:2 (encoded by SEQ ID NO:1). However, the invention encompassed by these claims has no apparent or disclosed patentable utility. This rejection is consistent with the current utility guidelines, published 1/5/01, 66 FR 1092. The instant application has provided a description of an isolated protein. However, the instant application does not disclose a specific and substantial biological role of this protein or its significance.

However, it is clear from the instant specification that the claimed receptor is what is termed an "orphan receptor" in the art. The instant application does not disclose the biological role of the claimed protein or its significance. Applicants disclose in the specification that the claimed receptor is believed to be a G protein-coupled receptor with 30% homology to C5a anaphylatoxin receptors. However, the basis that the receptor of the present invention is a 7 transmembrane receptor is not predictive of a use. There is little doubt that, after complete characterization, this protein will probably be found to have a patentable utility. This further characterization, however, is part of the act of invention and, until it has been undertaken, Applicants' claimed invention is incomplete.

The instant situation is directly analogous to that of which was addressed in *Brenner v. Manson*, 148 U.S.P.Q. 689 (Sus. Ct, 1966), in which a novel compound which was structurally analogous to other compounds which were known to possess anticancer activity was alleged to be potentially useful as an antitumor agent in the absence of evidence supporting this utility. The court expressed the opinion that all chemical compounds are “useful” to the chemical arts when this term is given its broadest interpretation. However, the court held that this broad interpretation was not the intended definition of “useful” as it appears in 35 U.S.C. 101, which required that an invention must have either an immediate obvious or fully disclosed “real-world” utility. The court held that:

“The basic quid pro quo contemplated by the Constitution and the Congress for granting a patent monopoly is the benefit derived by the public from an invention with substantial utility,” “[u]nless and until a process is refined and developed to this point - where specific benefit exists in currently available form – there is insufficient justification for permitting an applicant to engross what may prove to be a broad field,” and “a patent is not a hunting license,” “[i]t is not a reward for the search, but compensation for its successful conclusion.”

The specification discloses that the polynucleotide of the invention encodes a protein which has only 30% homology to C5a anaphylatoxin receptors. Based on the structural similarity, the specification asserts that the newly disclosed SEQ ID NO:1 and 2 have similar activities. The assertion that the disclosed proteins have biological activities similar to known C5a anaphylatoxin receptors cannot be accepted in the absence of supporting evidence, because generally, the art acknowledges that function cannot be predicted based solely on structural similarity to a protein found in the sequence databases. For example, Skolnick et al. (2000, Trends in Biotech. 18:34-39) state that knowing the protein structure by itself is insufficient to annotate a number of functional classes, and is also insufficient for annotating the specific details of protein function (see Box 2, p. 36). Similarly, Bork (2000, Genome Research 10:398-400) states that the error rate of functional annotations in the sequence database is considerable, making it even more difficult to infer correct function from a structural comparison of a new sequence with a sequence database (see especially p. 399). Such concerns are also echoed by Doerks et al. (1998, Trends in Genetics 14:248-250) who state that (1) functional information is only partially annotated in the database, ignoring multi functionality, resulting in underpredictions of functionality of a new protein and (2) overpredictions of functionality occur because structural similarity often does not necessarily coincide with functional similarity. Smith et al. (1997, Nature Biotechnology 15:1222-1223) remark that there are numerous cases in which proteins having very different functions share structural similarity due to evolution from a common ancestral gene.

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Brenner (1999, Trends in Genetics 15:132-133) argues that accurate inference of function from homology must be a difficult problem since, assuming there are only about 1000 major gene superfamilies in nature, then most homologs must have different molecular and cellular functions. Finally, Bork et al. (1996, Trends in Genetics 12:425-427) add that the software robots that assign functions to new proteins often assign a function to a whole new protein based on structural similarity of a small domain of the new protein to a small domain of a known protein. Such questionable interpretations are written into the sequence database and are then considered facts.

Therefore, based on the discussions above concerning the specific examples of structurally similar proteins that have different functions, along with the art's recognition that one cannot rely upon structural similarity alone to determine functionality, the specification fails to teach the skilled artisan the utility of the claimed polynucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1 (and the encoded protein of SEQ ID NO:2) which are only known to be homologous to C5a anaphylatoxin receptors. Therefore, the instant claims are drawn to a polynucleotide encoding a protein which has a yet undetermined function or biological significance. There is no actual and specific significance which can be attributed to said protein identified in the specification. For this reason, the instant invention is incomplete. In the absence of a knowledge of the natural ligands or biological significance of this protein, there is no immediately obvious patentable use for it. To employ a protein of the instant invention in the identification of substances which bind to and/or mediate activity of the said receptor is clearly to use it as the object of further research which has been determined by the courts to be a non-patentable utility. Since the instant specification does not disclose a "real-world" use for said protein then the claimed invention is incomplete and, therefore, does not meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101 as being useful.

4. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112, first paragraph - enablement

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

A. Claims 16 and 38-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to adequately teach how to use the instant invention. Specifically, since the claimed invention is not supported by a specific, substantial and credible asserted utility or a well established utility for the reasons set forth above, one skilled in the art clearly would not know how to use the claimed invention.

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B. Claims 38 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

The deposit of the biological material is considered necessary for the enablement of the current invention (see MPEP Chapter 2400 and 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.801-1.809). Elements required for practicing a claimed invention must be known and readily available to the public or obtainable by a repeatable method set forth in the specification. If a deposit (Lyme21-9 – PTA-4543) is made under the terms of the Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure (e.g. see 961 OG 21, 1977), and Applicants, their assignee or their agent needs to provide a declaration containing the following:

1. the current address of the ATCC (*this requirement has been fulfilled in the instant specification*).
2. a declaration, or statement over attorney's signature stating that all restrictions imposed by the depositor on the availability to the public of the deposited biological material be irrevocably removed upon the granting of the patent (see MPEP Chapter 2410.01 and 37 C.F.R. § 1.808).

5. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

A. Claims 16 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Accession Number U33448 (GenEmbl; 08-OCT-1996). The claims recite an isolated recombinant receptor comprising SEQ ID NO:2. Accession Number U33448 is a receptor sequence 100% identical to SEQ ID NO:2 (Sequence Comparison A).

B. Claims 16 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Accession Numbers Q15722; Q13305; Q92641 and Q9BSU5 (UniProt_7.2; 01-NOV-1997). The claims recite an isolated recombinant receptor comprising SEQ ID NO:2. The cited sequence is 100% identical to SEQ ID NO:2 (Sequence Comparison B).

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6. Conclusion


A. No claim is allowable.

Advisory information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert Landsman whose telephone number is (571) 272-0888. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 10 AM – 7 PM (eastern).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brenda Brumback can be reached on 571-272-0961. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Robert Landsman
Primary Examiner
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